



Headteacher News

St Matthew's Catholic Primary School
Alnwick Grove
Jarrow
Tyne and Wear
NE32 5YT
Tel: 01914898355
Website
www.stmatthewsrc.org
Email:
office@stmatthewsjarrow.co.uk

Welcome to our happy school, where everyone is valued and given the opportunity to 'let their light shine.'
School Mission Statement

January 2024

A Super Start to 2024!

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Dear Parents, Carers and Children,

It has been wonderful to welcome our pupils and staff back after the Christmas break and we have had a fantastic start to the New Year, with children working incredibly hard in all classes and enjoying their new learning topics. You can find all of our long term planning maps and curriculum information on our website on each year group page, so please do take a look to see what your child will be studying this term.

2024 also sees St Matthew's celebrating its 70 year anniversary! So many children and families have passed through our school and we are so proud that St Matthew's has

been an integral part of the community for such a long time. We will be planning some exciting celebrations so do watch this space!

We have another busy term ahead, with lots of exciting opportunities for our children and also many events which we would love parents/carers to join us for; please see our back page for more information and keep up to date by using our diary on the school website.

Please could we remind parents to ensure your child comes to school in full school uniform each day or correct PE kit when it is PE day—please see our uniform policy on the website. Just a reminder that no earrings or jewellery are permitted and we also

ask that children with long hair tie this back.

As always, our staff are happy to assist in any way they can. Please feel free to contact Mrs Young or Mrs Traynor-Richardson in our office if you have any queries or would like to make an appointment with a staff member or myself.

We would also love to hear your feedback regarding our newsletter and any items you would like to see in future newsletters. Please just email the office with any ideas.

Best wishes,
Mrs Alderson
Head Teacher



Sporting Success!

We have had so many amazing sporting successes recently- here are a few highlights!

Girls County Champions!

Our girls football team took part in the County final at Chester-le-Street and, after a penalty shoot out, they emerged victorious! They will now represent County Durham in the national finals in Liverpool later in the term.

The Road to Wembley Continues!

Our mixed team took part in the EFL Cup against nearly 40 other local primary schools. The team were brilliant and beat Fulwell Juniors in the final. The team will now represent Sunderland AFC in the northern finals in Sheffield. If they win the next round they will play at Wembley in May. Good Luck to both teams!

Y6 Sportshall Silver Medalists

Our Y6 class all took part in the South Tyneside Sportshall finals, finishing in a

brilliant 2nd place. They then represented South Tyneside in the County finals, where they finished 6th place - our best ever result!

Gymnastics Superstars!

Three of our Y6 pupils took part in the South Tyneside gymnastic finals. All three did brilliant routines. Sienna and Georgia finishing in 3rd place overall., whilst Emie finished in 4th place. Well done, girls!

Thank you to Miss Wiblin, our football coaches and our volunteers who help to support these events - you are amazing!

'Eco-School' News

At St Matthew's, we believe in living out Pope Francis' call to look after our planet and everyone in it. Mrs Alderson and Miss Jackson lead a dedicated 'Eco-Committee', made up of pupils of all ages. The group are beginning a journey to become an 'Eco-School' and are currently writing an action plan - watch this space for more info!

We would like to remind you that we have our 'Fundraise and Recycle' Bin as you come into school, where you can **recycle all your clothing, bags and shoes**. The money raised from this then goes to school and we have raised **over £500** to date! We also have a 'Buddy Bench'

coming to us shortly as we have recycled over 2000kg of clothing—well done, everyone!

In addition to this, we also take **batteries for recycling and printer cartridges**, whilst Miss Wiblin has just received a huge container for us to recycle **unwanted football boots**, so that they can be redistributed to the local community.

We will also be holding a 'costume swap' for World Book Day costumes. We are conscious that these costumes often get used once and would like to help to save unwanted costumes from being sent to landfill. Please could you send any unwanted World Book Day costumes,

washed and in good condition, into the school office. The swap **will take place in the gazebo on Monday 29 January**—please do come along and find a new costume for World Book Day!



A Winning Design!

In the autumn term, some of our pupils entered a competition to design the annual Christmas card for Kate Osborne, MP for Jarrow.

Over 1000 entries were received from local children and we were all thrilled to receive the news that one of our Year 5 pupils, Jacob Sheridan, had won the competition!

Kate came into school to present Jacob with his prize and a copy of his card, which has reached thousands of constituents and businesses. Mandy Voong in Year 4 was also a runner up. A huge well done to all the children who entered for their amazing entries!



E-Safety Day

Online safety is a key area of our safeguarding education and computing curriculum in school; we teach aspects of e-safety in all year groups throughout the year and Mrs Torley, our dedicated Deputy Headteacher and also our Computing Subject Leader, keeps all staff up to date with the most recent E-Safety advice and teaching.

E-Safety Day this year is Tuesday 6 February and all classes will be focusing on different aspects of e-safety on this day.

We also want to help you, as parents, to navigate this very difficult area.

There are free weekly online safety virtual sessions available to all parents via the NSPCC website; please register for one of these sessions at <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/free-online-safety-group-workshops/>

Please also see <https://saferinternet.org.uk/guide-and-resource/parents-and-carers> for some excellent resources.

If you have an online safety concern or a safeguarding concern of any kind, please contact Mrs Alderson (Designated Safeguarding Lead –DSL), Mrs Torley (Deputy DSL), Miss Wiblin or Miss Shawcross (Assistant DSLs),

Healthy Schools

As part of our 'Healthy School Award,' we encourage children to make healthy food choices and our **delicious school lunches are carefully considered to ensure a balanced diet.**

Please may we remind parents to also **consider packed lunch choices carefully.**

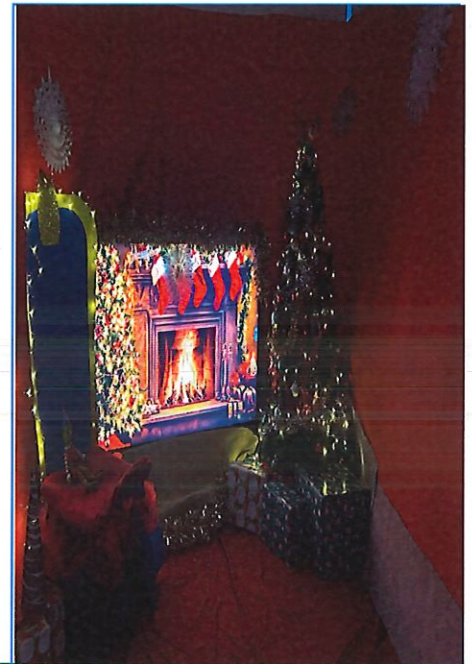
Try to aim for : 1) A portion of bread (or similar), rice, potatoes or pasta.2) Plenty of fruit and vegetables.3) A portion of dairy or a calcium rich alternative.4) Some protein in the form of beans, pulses, fish, egg,

meat. 5) A healthy drink.

Please may we remind parents that, due to allergies across school, **no nuts or nut based products** are allowed. Thank you.

Happy New Year from all the Friends of St Matthew's! We wanted to start by thanking everyone - volunteers, parents, staff and of course pupils for making our Christmas Grotto another very special and successful event. Despite the freezing temperatures, Father CHRISTmas, Gingerbread and everyone else involved made sure it was a festively fabulous event. We are still totting up the figures, but with proceeds from the Grotto, Christmas raffle and Christmas cards, we are delighted to say we have raised well over £1,000 during December alone. We'll be working with staff and the children to make sure that money is put to good use for the benefit of the pupils - recent purchases have included new art equipment for KS1 and maths coding technology for KS2. Looking ahead to 2024 and as ever, we'll have the official business of our Annual General

Meeting coming up in February, where it would be wonderful to see some new members. As a committee, some of us are (sadly) nearing the end of our time as parents at St Matthew's so we really do need to ensure the good work of FOSM carries on into the future with some new members. If you want to know more, follow and drop us a message on Facebook (FOSMJarrow) or send us an email at fosmjarrow@gmail.com. We'll also be sharing dates of upcoming events including our regular Easter event in the coming weeks so look out more information coming soon!



Attendance and Punctuality

At St Matthew's Catholic Primary School, we have a history of excellent attendance and are very proud of our children and families for their determination to attend school every day, on time. Our attendance to date this year is 95.5% and our aspirational target for the year is 97%.

We have a weekly attendance trophy for the class with the best attendance each week and children with excellent attendance receive certificates each term.

Please could parents help us with this by **ensuring your child gets to school on time,**

each day and by trying to arrange medical appointments before or after school whenever possible. All requests for leave should be carried out by completing the school form available from our school office. Please note that **leave can only be granted for exceptional circumstances.** In line with government policy and advice from the Local Authority, unfortunately headteachers **cannot authorise any absence from school during term time for a family holiday.**

We also have a recently updated Attendance Policy - please see our website for more information.

Parent Questionnaires

Gaining feedback is a vital part of our continual school improvement. The results of our 2023 questionnaire are now on our website at

<https://www.stmatthewsrc.org/our-school/about-us/attainment/>

Please note that Mrs Aitchison (RE Subject Leader) will also shortly be sending out a series of RE questionnaires in coming weeks via Google Surveys—we would be very grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete these.

Road Safety

Please could we remind all parents to take care when dropping off and picking up children at the start and end of the school day. The roads around school can get very busy and we are concerned for the safety of all the members of our school community.

Please **avoid parking on the yellow lines** and also ensure you do not block any cars in. We have also had some complaints from local residents and the local Neighbourhood Officer regarding cars being parked in front of their drives or on the grass verges.

When dropping your child off, please also ensure that they **do not get out of the car directly on to the road.** Cars can come along the road very quickly and may not see the child getting out of the car.

We have been speaking with our pupils regarding road safety and will continue to promote the importance of this in school. Thank you for your support with this.



Children's Mental Health Week

The 5 to 11 February is Children's Mental Health Week. The theme of this year is 'My Voice Matters.' All classes will be holding sessions with Courtney Jennings, our Primary Mental Health Worker, and also carrying out activities throughout the week around this.

It would be wonderful if families could also carry out an activity for home from the Place 2 Be website. Please visit

<https://www.childrensmentalhealthweek.org.uk/families/> to access some lovely resources.

Spring Term Dates—for more details see our website calendar

Friday 19 January	Year 4 Sportshall Athletics
Wednesday 24 January	Y3 Multi Skills Event
Thursday 25 January	3.30pm: Year 5 Hawkhirst Information meeting
Tuesday 30 January	2.45pm: Reception Parent Reading session in hall—all Reception parents welcome.
Thursday 1 February	5pm: Year 6 SATs Information Session
Friday 2 February	Year 2 trip to Discovery Museum
5 to 9 February	Mental Health Week in School
Tuesday 6 February	E-Safety Day
Wednesday 7 February	Key Stage 2 Swimming Gala (PM)
Thursday 8 February	2.45pm: Y2 Parent Reading Session in Hall—all Y2 parents welcome
Friday 9 February	9.15am: Year 4 Lenten Celebration of the Word (Liturgy) - all parents of Year 4 welcome Girls Football League afternoon 3 Break up for half term. Children return on Monday 19 February.
Thursday 22 February	10am: Lenten Mass in School
Tuesday 27 February	Mixed Football Team: Bart Rippon Trophy all day 2.45pm: Year 1 Parent Reading Session in Hall - all Year 1 parents welcome
Monday 4 March	Girls Football Cup all day
Thursday 7 March	World Book Day—dress up as your favourite book character or wear PJs/onesies and bring your favourite book for a day of reading fun...paired reading, World Book Day activities and lots of story time! We are also encouraging children (and staff!) to enter our 'Radical Reading' competition, sending in their photos of reading in exciting places such as on a bouncy castle or out on a walk! More information to follow.
Friday 8 March	9.15am in hall: Women Who Care for Us Liturgy - Reception Class. All parents/carers of Reception class welcome
11-15 March	Science Week in School
Monday 11 March	Year 5 Bikeability from Monday to Thursday – more information to follow
Tuesday 12 March	3pm: Year 4 Parent Reading Session in Hall—all Year 4 parents welcome Girls Football League afternoon 4
Wednesday 13 March	South of Tyne swimming finals (PM)
Friday 15 March	Year 2 Cricket festival
Friday 22 March	Year 4 trip to Arbeia Roman Fort
Monday 25 and Tuesday 26 March	Parents' Evenings—more information to follow. Y6 Parents Evenings are Monday 25 March and Wednesday 27 March.
Tuesday 26 March	10am: End of term Mass in Church. All welcome Reception Gymnastics at the Urban Factory—AM
Thursday 28 March	Break up at 1.15pm for Easter holidays. We return to school on Monday 15 April 2024.
	Information regarding any further Educational Visits/Sporting Events will be sent out to relevant classes in due course.